

The Washington City Council met with the Greenville City Council on Monday, October 23, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. at Bradford Creek Golf Course. The meeting was called to order by Greenville Mayor Parrott and Washington Mayor Judy Jennette, followed by the invocation by Washington Councilman Ed Gibson and the pledge of allegiance led by Greenville Council Member Ray Craft.

The following were present from the Washington City Council:

Mayor Judy Jennette
Mayor Pro-Tem Darwin Woolard
Councilman Ed Gibson
Councilman Mickey Gahagan
Councilman Archie Jennings
Councilman Richard Brooks

The following were present from the Greenville City Council:

Mayor Don Parrott
Mayor Pro-Tem Mildred A. Council
Council Member Ray Craft
Council Member Pat Dunn
Council Member Chip Little
Council Member Rose H. Glover
Council Member Larry Spell

Also present were Department Heads from the City of Washington and Department Heads from the City of Greenville, along with Mike Voss, of the Washington Daily News, and Leanne Smith, of the Beaufort Observer.

Mr. Mike Cato, Golf Pro at Bradford Creek Golf Course, gave a history of the golf course and explained how important it is to the area today with its championship tees. He provided a complimentary round of golf to all elected officials and invited them all to play.

Greenville Mayor Parrott thanked Mr. Cato for hosting the City Councils. He welcomed the two Councils to the meeting, stating that it is a historic event. It is hoped that the two groups can discuss how they can work together from an economic development standpoint. He hopes that they can continue to have a good working relationship.

Washington Mayor Jennette stated that this is a fabulous opportunity to look at the development along the two main highway corridors between the two cities to come together to discuss their benefits to both cities.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

On motion by Greenville Council Member Craft, seconded by Greenville Council Member Little, Greenville City Council unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

On motion by Washington Mayor Pro tem Woolard, seconded by Washington Councilman Gibson, Washington City Council unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

GREENVILLE PLANNING UPDATE

Greenville's Director of Community Development, Merrill Flood, explained how the City's population was 35,740 in 1980 when the City consisted of 15.1 square miles. In 1990, the population was 46,213, which was a 23% increase in population. Between 1990 and 2000 there was the largest increase with 31% growth, increasing to 27.9 square miles in 2000. The total population today is 68,977 and the square mileage is a little over 31 square miles. The total amount of property in the extraterritorial jurisdiction is almost 62 miles. In 2005, the City began to grow on the fringe of the southwestern portion of the City. The most dramatic period of growth was between 1990 and 2000, and there is a similar trend for 30% or greater growth over this decade.

Mr. Flood continued by stating that two major thoroughfares, US 264 and NC 33 East have had a number of developments. Additions to the 264 area include Bradford Creek Golf Course, the water treatment plant, soccer complex, and North Campus Crossing which consists of 600 acres. East Carolina University has plans for major intramural facilities adjacent to the multi-family project. Pirates Cove on NC 33 has 264 units. Those developments are for students to accommodate the growth of the University. There was a sewer test area between Greenville Utilities and the County 10 years ago in southwest Greenville that has provided for a lot of growth in that area, and it is anticipated that by 2015, the population of that area will be 20,000 to 23,000.

Mr. Flood stated that Greenville is predominantly residential land use with 35% being rezoned residential and 29% being in a residential holding pattern. On average, the City does 42 to 43 rezonings per year. Since 1998, they have had balanced growth around the City, and rezonings over that period have been 68% residential. Areas to the west have not received the same amount of growth; however, it will not be long before those areas are filled in. There are many preliminary plats for the southern portion of the city.

Mr. Flood explained that the first comprehensive plan for Greenville was written in 1992, and the goal was to update it every five years. There was an update in 1997 and again in 2004. There were 900 to 1000 changes just to the land use portion of the plan alone. The zoning patterns are residential in nature. In 2004, Pitt County adopted zoning, zoning most areas residential/agricultural. With a little over 10 miles between the two towns, there are a number of boundaries between Greenville and Washington, such as Grimesland and Simpson.

Mr. Flood stated that the City Council made redevelopment a priority in 2003, and since that time, they have gone through detailed processes. The focus has been on downtown and West Greenville neighborhoods, and Revitalization plans that will take the City forward for the next 20 years have been developed. The West Greenville Redevelopment Plan includes policy statements for housing, economy, community facilities, urban form and land use, mobility, recreation and parks, and community character. It is felt that what happens in one area affects the other area. The plan provides for mixed use development in the downtown. There is a need to increase homeownership in West Greenville. There are also provisions for a new entrance into East Carolina University on Tenth Street. The staff is trying to come up with ways to make the Town Common more used. There are plans for a hotel/alumni center for East Carolina University. The streetscape project has focused on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Dickinson Avenue, Evans Street, etc. More green space and pedestrian walkways are planned. Expansion of Sadie Saulter School in West Greenville is also included in the plan. Albemarle Avenue will allow for more mixed use activities. There is a need for parking garages and improved infrastructure, and those are addressed in the Revitalization Plan.

Upon being asked the process for preparing the land use plan, Mr. Flood explained the process and stated that a committee has been set up each time. There are community visioning processes for anything put on paper, and consultants help with the planning process. Historic districts are taken into consideration. In addition to physical attributes, the Revitalization Plan deals with commercial properties and trying to get businesses to relocate.

Mr. Flood was asked to what extent the airport has contributed to the growth of Greenville, and he replied that an airport is one of the amenities businesses look for, so he felt that it has helped the community.

Mr. Flood stated that the City is in the process of creating another business loan program because of people moving out of downtown and the West Greenville area. The City has a façade improvement plan, which has provided for regrowth of downtown.

Upon being asked if the City provides funding for incentives, Mr. Flood responded that at one time the City did, and bond funds were used to leverage that. The Community Development Department oversees that.

Upon being asked if the City partners with the University as a partner in areas where the University and City blend together, Mr. Flood responded that it does since what happens downtown affects the University and vice versa.

Mr. Flood was asked about there being no power lines in the artist's renderings of the Downtown Revitalization and West Greenville Revitalization Projects, and he replied that the long-term vision is to have those underground; however, that will be quite a while down the road.

Upon being asked about public transportation, Mr. Flood stated that the Public Works Department is in the process of dealing with a regional transportation project.

WASHINGTON PLANNING UPDATE

Mr. Bobby Roberson, Washington Planning Director, stated that Washington, NC is the "Heart of the Inner Banks". The Town of Washington has had a \$6.2 million project funded primarily through the Clean Water Trust Fund, in which Washington paid \$2 million. A consultant developed a two-year strategy called the Downtown Washington Revitalization Strategy. The goals of the strategy are to connect the street network into a walkable grid, strengthen the urban core by encouraging new development, revitalize historic neighborhoods with rehabilitated architecture, and provide an interconnected streetscaped sidewalk and trail system that links the residential neighborhoods to existing shopping and dining areas. The revitalization study area is Moss Landing, which involves 86 townhouses. The Downtown Washington Revitalization Strategy encompasses the physical design aspects of the revitalization process. The three major aspects to the physical revitalization plan include creation of waterfront plaza and greenspace; development of activity nodes along the waterfront; and streetscaping, gateways, and pedestrian improvements. The eastern side is expected to grow with about 4000 people at the country club. The Whichards Beach section may change some of Beaufort County. There will also be growth toward Greenville.

Mr. Roberson stated that the City of Washington CAMA Core Land Use Plan was prepared in May, 2006. This document attempted to comprehensively assess all issues and concerns that will affect growth and the natural environment over the next five-year planning period. Resource limitation obviously necessitates the prioritization of key or primary issues. These primary issues are those that the City will spend additional resources in analyzing, assessing and developing goals, policies, objectives, and implementing tasks to address over the planning period. The issues identified included improving the Central Business District, accommodating multiple uses of the river, developing and improving gateways to the City, affordable housing, areas for annexation, the Capital Improvement Program, US Highway 17 Bypass, and smart growth. The future land use map depicts application of the policies for growth and development and the desired future patterns of land use and land development through 2025.

Mr. Roberson continued by explaining the regional strategy for eco-tourism.

- North Carolina's inland coast, the Albemarle-Pamlico region is perhaps the richest region of the State in terms of natural resources, yet it is one of the poorest in terms of economic development.
- Characterized by wetlands, marshes and swamps, the region has supported traditional opportunities for fishing, forestry, agriculture, and mining, but there has been little other economic opportunity.
- The physical and cultural limitations to traditional development of this region are significant. Extensive acreages of the inland coast are simply not available due to their physical nature (wetlands) or their political nature (wildlife refuges and parks).
- The limitations to traditional development for the inland coast have been ultimately proven to be both a trial and a blessing. Because of them, the City is financially limited, and yet, because of them, it is endowed with a relatively undefiled natural bounty and cultural heritage that remains uniquely evident in these times of social homogeneity.

- Despite the fact that traditional tourism has flourished on the barrier islands of the nearby outer banks, the inland coast of North Carolina, Washington has traditionally been seen as a “hurdle to cross” in the trip to the barrier islands.
- Estuaries are where freshwater from rivers mix with the salt waters of the sea. The Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system is the second largest estuarine system in the United States. Located at the very point at which the freshwater Tar River becomes the brackish Pamlico River, Washington is ideally situated as a gateway to the estuarine region. Washington is virtually the geographic center of estuarine system. It is accessible to the region’s resident. It is at the intersection of major north/south and east/west travel corridors.

Mr. Roberson stated that the implementation strategy involves the North Carolina Estuarium-Tourism and Environmental Education, Washington Historic District and Created Wetlands. Quarterly events that Washington has that bring people into the community include the North Carolina Wildlife Festival, Summer Festival, Boat Show, Smoke on the Water, Music in the Streets, and the Fountain Power Boat Race.

Upon being asked what the City can do to do a better job in the historic district, Mr. Roberson replied that Washington has more historic tax credits than anywhere in North Carolina. The adaptive reuse in the Central Business District has created a lot of outside interest.

Mr. Roberson was asked about the number of bed and breakfasts and hotels in Washington, and he replied that there are 520 hotel rooms. Washington gets overflow from Greenville.

Upon being asked about the potential partners and activities for ecotourism, Mr. Roberson stated that Washington partners with Partnerships for the Sound, and they have developed a good working relationship with them. There is also Tourism Authority with a full-time Tourism Director. There is also a historic Civic Center.

Mr. Roberson was asked where Washington would be in ten years, and Mr. Roberson stated that Washington would be doing what it knows best. The Boat Show is brand new and will come in 2008.

Washington City Manager Jim Smith stated that Washington has a private event group and they hope to develop the boat show along the coast between Maryland and Florida.

Mr. Roberson stated that the City has co-sponsored with the hospital, which is a vibrant issue for the City. Medical services can be provided.

Mr. Roberson stated that Washington has been hit by five hurricanes and tropical storms in the recent past. He continued by stating that the City is making available homes to low-moderate first-time homebuyers in the \$75,000 to \$79,000 range. This is being financed through the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and First South Bank. They have never had a foreclosure.

The City of Washington was commended by Greenville Mayor Pro-Tem Council for being an All-American City. She asked if they still have the dinner cruise, to which Mr. Roberson replied that it left when the City was hit with tropical storms. The City talked about a high speed ferry in the 1990s that would go to the Outer Banks. They are hopeful they can pick up on that. Some of the reasons they were named an All-American City are the affordable housing provided, cultural opportunities with the Arts Council, including all segments of the community, and the water treatment plant.

Upon being asked if the City is seeing more need for residential development downtown, Mr. Roberson replied that the City encourages the actual adaptive reuse and turning two to four story buildings into condominium units. There are about 200 units inside the Central Business District. They have to deal with CAMA on the historic preservation side, so not only does it have to go through the local commission, but it has to go to the State as well. The boat slips took about 2.5 years to get approved.

Mr. Roberson was asked what the two cities can do to guarantee bypass quality of the 264 corridor that connects the two cities, and he replied that Beaufort County doesn't have land use controls outside the City as Pitt County does. The City will be getting more into the personal service setup, which includes 152 uses. They want to narrow it down into nodes, Highway Corridor 1 and Highway Corridor 2.

It was noted that the Turnage Theater has been around for years. East Carolina University has agreed to partner on that; however, finalization of the deal has not been done. The building has been gutted and construction has begun. By December 2007, they plan to be in operation.

Washington officials were asked how parking was being provided for the downtown area, which is still being developed.

Mr. Roberson stated that Washington has a lot of construction, and a Parking Commission has been established. They will have to work out agreements for parking.

Upon being asked if there is a special zoning that makes it easier for residential in the downtown area, Mr. Roberson stated that the City allows for density bonuses, whereby the only off-street required is ½ space per unit.

Washington officials were asked about the Music in the Streets event, and Mr. Roberson stated that musical acts are set up and down Main Street and the side streets. There is an economic benefit to the businesses there, especially to restaurants and the businesses that stay open. This event is sponsored by the Downtown Merchants Association and has grown over the years. This is the fourth year of the event.

Washington Mayor Jennette stated that people enjoy bringing their boats there. Restaurants have seen a big increase.

Washington City Manager Smith stated that in coordinating this with the Greenville City Manager, the focus was on US 264. Greenville is also looking at NC 33 and Washington is not. There is also a mutual interest in that road that Washington hasn't given much thought to. On 264, one of the things they need to do is limit side friction, promote common drives, mandate common drives and send access roads along the side of 264 rather than dumping traffic on 264. If they can keep 264 as a limited access roadway, 33 may become the commercial corridor. The other transportation issue is the airport. Washington needs Greenville's airport to be a hub for eastern North Carolina. He suggested working out shuttles to the airport and receiving some sort of subsidy from the airport or airlines.

GREENVILLE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Greenville Director of Public Works, Tom Tysinger, stated that the Greenville Urban Area includes Greenville, Winterville, Ayden, Simpson and surrounding portions of Pitt County. The urban area population is estimated at 125,000. The Greenville Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan that was adopted February 2005 is updated every five years, and an update is currently in progress. The Thoroughfare Plan is used in directing future transportation improvements and development. Mr. Tysinger stated that Greenville reserves rights-of-way and future rights-of-way for the development of thoroughfares. The high priority projects were discussed.

- Southwest Bypass. This is a project that will cost approximately \$180 million and will consist of 11 miles, depending on which of the three alternatives are chosen by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The project is to construct a four-lane fully controlled facility from US 264 west of Greenville to NC 11 south of Ayden. The draft Environmental Impact Statement for this project has been completed, and it is pending the selection of the preferred corridor by the Department of Transportation. The purpose and need is to reduce traffic congestion along Memorial Drive (NC 11). The Southwest Bypass will add a critical link of controlled access freeway along NC 11 from the Global Transpark to the Tidewater area of Virginia.
- Fire Tower Road Widening. This project is the number two priority and will be a two-year construction project. The bid received last week was \$21 million for this project, which

consists of widening the existing roadway to a four-lane divided five-lane section to include multi-modal facilities, and landscaping improvements from Corey Road to Memorial Drive (NC 11/903). Construction is scheduled to begin in 2007. This project will increase the capacity of Fire Tower Road and reduce congestion along Greenville Boulevard and Memorial Drive. It will provide an additional east/west travel capacity in a high growth area.

- Tenth Street Connector. The City, Hospital and University have each contributed \$2 million toward this project, for a total of \$6 million. The project is to extend Tenth Street from Dickinson Avenue to Memorial Drive at Stantonsburg Road with a grade separation at CSX Railroad. This provides east/west travel through the heart of Greenville connecting the Hospital, East Carolina University, Uptown and West Greenville. The planning and environmental studies are underway. The right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to be done in 2009 and the project completed in 2011.
- Evans Street/Old Tar Road Widening. This project is to widen the existing roadway to a four/five lane urban facility with multi-modal and landscaping improvements from Greenville Boulevard to Worthington Road and Cooper Street. It increases the capacity along Evans Street/Old Tar Road, reduces congestion along Memorial Boulevard, and connects to the residential areas in Winterville to nearby commercial centers. The planning and environmental studies are ongoing for the entire section. There is no schedule for construction at this time.
- Greenville Boulevard Widening. This is the newest project, which is to widen Greenville Boulevard to a six-lane facility with intersection improvements from Memorial Drive to Charles Boulevard. It adds travel capacity to the critical commercial corridor. The current traffic volumes range from 30,000 to 45,000 average daily trips. The corridor study has been completed, and the City is awaiting funding to begin planning and environmental studies.
- Eastern Bypass. This is a recent addition to the Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan and will take place about 25 years in the future. It provides a freeway around the east side of Greenville and creates an urban loop when completed. It will provide an alternative route to Greenville Boulevard, Tenth Street and Fire Tower Road.

Mr. Tysinger stated that the planning process happens every two years, and the last two projects addressed—Greenville Boulevard Widening and the Eastern Bypass—are “pie in the sky” projects. Transportation improvements of interest in the Greenville Urban Area that have taken place or that are near completion include the following:

- North Campus Crossing intersection improvements at US 264 and Greenville Boulevard
- Tenth Street and Greenville Boulevard intersection improvements. This project involves NC Highway 33 West from Chocowinity to Tenth Street/Greenville Boulevard and US 264 West from Washington to Tenth Street and Greenville Boulevard. This project created dual left turns in all directions.
- Arlington Boulevard Extension improvements. These improvements relieve congestion around Emergency Drive and give people coming from Rocky Mount and Tarboro an alternate way to get around Greenville. This project is near completion.
- Charles Boulevard Vicinity Enhancement Project. This \$750,000 joint project created a five-lane road in front of the new baseball stadium, did away with the right turn lane and created sidewalks on Charles Boulevard.

Mr. Tysinger was asked to “speak to the wisdom” of working on Highway 17 now instead of waiting until it is heavily traveled.

Mr. Tysinger suggested that it be put on a priority list. It would be helpful for Washington to go to the Department of Transportation and the Rural Planning Organization. They definitely need to go before the Regional Planning Organization. Also, there needs to be a presence in Raleigh talking about it. Mr. Tysinger stated that 60 to 70 percent of his time is spent on transportation, and he is in Raleigh every week or two.

When asked about if Mr. Tysinger had found the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) to be effective, he responded that the earliest MPOs were formed in the early 1980s, and the RPOs are only about two to four years old. A federal group will listen to the MPO and RPO, and he has found them to be extremely helpful. Greenville, through the staff and Mayor, has stepped up talking to legislators and the Department of Transportation Board Member. The Mayor sometimes goes to Raleigh with Mr. Tysinger, as has the City Council and Chancellor. Every time they see a legislator, they talk about transportation issues.

Greenville Mayor Parrott stated that if the City can put some money with the project, it moves it up on the list, and the Tenth Street Connector is an example of that. That project wasn't out there when they first started going to Raleigh. The Secretary of the Department of Transportation told the City to find some funding. After \$2 million was pledged by each of the City, University and Hospital, it got on the list and got funded. The City had the conceptual drawings when they first approached the Department of Transportation.

Upon being asked to talk about 264 and how the City tries to control driveway cuts, Mr. Tysinger stated that to control driveway cuts, promoting the side streets or collector roads needs to happen. They need to work through that process. One of the things being talked about inside the MPO is developing regulations that are the same from city to city and county to county, which is difficult to accomplish. It would be helpful to sit down with Pitt County, Beaufort County, the Department of Transportation and the City of Washington. Within Greenville's jurisdiction, staff sits down with the developer and works out requirements jointly.

Greenville Mayor Parrott stated that Greenville's extraterritorial jurisdiction comes to the 264 corridor almost at the Pitt County line, and there is Pitt County zoning.

Washington City Manager Smith stated that they are currently working on protecting the waterways in Beaufort County, and there is a lot of development pressure. There is no expectation that the County is going to enact zoning in the near future, as that will require special legislation. The Greenville and Washington extraterritorial jurisdictions need to be extended along 264 and 33 so there can be some regulation on those corridors.

It was brought up that the third corridor is Firetower Road as it takes traffic from Mobley Road to Grimesland.

Mr. Tysinger stated that they are all on the thoroughfare plan. Once it gets outside the City's jurisdiction, even though they are in urban area, the urban area is not regulation authority. They rely on Pitt County to do that, and Pitt County doesn't regulate it. Greenville has similar problems.

Greenville Council Member Dunn suggested that they may need to bring counties into this discussion.

WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Washington Public Works Director Allen Lewis showed a visual of projected improvements to Highway 17, which included a 2.8 mile bridge that would tie into 264 and end just north of the intersection of Whispering Pines Road and Highway 17. This is a \$250 million three-year project scheduled to begin in February with utility relocation. This will have a big impact on the city. There will be no accesses onto or off of the bridge. A decision does need to be made on how the communities will regulate growth on 264. The Department of Transportation would be pleased to hear the two councils talking about limiting access on that route.

Upon being asked if the bridge is in Washington's extraterritorial jurisdiction, Mr. Lewis replied that everything is in from the river to where it ties in on the north end.

Upon being asked how far it is from the Pitt County line once it crosses 264, Washington Fire Chief replied that it is three miles from the fire station, so it is approximately 3.5 miles from the county line.

Washington Mayor Jennette stated that a group of counties and towns from Virginia to Jacksonville has combined monies to try to get 17 four-laned. About \$180,000 has been raised.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL GENERAL DISCUSSION

Greenville Mayor Parrott suggested forming a committee of members from the Washington and Greenville City Councils to meet once a quarter to see how the two cities can move forward to meet some of the needs. He suggested the committee meeting with the entire councils once a year to discuss their needs.

Greenville Council Member Spell, stating that is an excellent idea, volunteered to serve on the committee.

Greenville Mayor Pro-Tem Mildred Council informed the Washington representatives that Greenville will be hosting the North Carolina League of Municipalities conference in 2009. As another partnership, the City of Greenville may wish to do some tours in Washington.

The estuarium was suggested as a tour.

Greenville Mayor Parrott suggested that is something the committee could work on.

Washington Mayor Jennette expressed concurrence about having a committee to work on this. She also stated that she would like to see an assisted living facility between Greenville and Washington, as that would be prime location for a facility.

Greenville Mayor Parrott stated that he is excited about having this meeting to share thoughts and ideas from the two communities and for planning how they can work together in the future, partnering in such areas as educational and medical facilities. He is excited about the opportunity to try to improve the economic development of the two communities through a partnership. He suggested that the City of Washington come up with two or three people to serve on the committee and Greenville will do the same. The committee will have its first meeting in January 2007.

On motion by Greenville Council Member Spell, seconded by Greenville Council Member Dunn, Greenville City Council unanimously agreed to pursue having a committee comprised of Washington representatives and Greenville representatives to meet quarterly.

On motion by Washington Councilman Gahagan and seconded by Washington Councilman Gibson, Washington City Council unanimously agreed to pursue having a committee comprised of Washington representatives and Greenville representatives to meet quarterly.

Greenville Mayor Pro-Tem Council asked that they not forget the youth. Greenville has an established Youth Council that has attended the National League of Cities meeting and they have been involved. She welcomed the opportunity to work with Washington on creating their own.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Greenville Council Member Craft, seconded by Greenville Council Member Glover, Greenville City Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

On motion by Washington Mayor Pro tem Woolard, seconded by Washington Councilman Jennings, Washington City Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m. to Monday, October 30, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at the Brown Library for a Pre-Planning Session.

**Rita A. Thompson, CMC
City Clerk**